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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for our many freedoms. Help us to use them, not to hide behind safe walls but to make our world a better place. Teach us to live with eternity in our view and to refuse to let the world squeeze us into its mold.

Lord, give wisdom to our lawmakers. May they seek Your approval above the hollow applause of men and women. As the servants of this Nation, may they strive to be filled with Your spirit of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. Use our Senators to reverse the spiritual and moral drift of our Nation by exemplifying righteousness, repentance, rectitude, and reconciliation in the lives they lead.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, September 17, 2009.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each. However, I ask unanimous consent that the full 30 minutes of the majority be controlled by the Senator from Pennsylvania, Mr. SPECTER.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. The majority will control the first 30 minutes, the Republicans will control the second 30 minutes. Following morning business, the Senate will begin consideration of H.R. 2996, the Interior appropriations bill. Following the managers' opening statements, the floor will be open for Senators to offer amendments. At 2 p.m., we will resume consideration of H.R. 3288, the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill, and proceed to a series of up to six rollcall votes and complete action on that bill.

I think it is important to say to everyone that we are now in a mode of doing some legislation. I appreciate very much the cooperation of all Senators, Democrats and Republicans. We are now in the mode of, when a bill comes up, people can offer amendments. For a number of years, that

simply was not the case. When there are circumstances and a decision is made not to allow amendments, I understand, after people are in the habit of being able to offer amendments, how concerned they become. We will approach that whenever it comes about, if there is a decision made to so-called fill the tree and not allow amendments.

In the way we are working, we are taking some tough votes. Democrats are offering some difficult amendments, Republicans are offering some difficult amendments. But that is OK. We are working through these bills. We could have been voting on cloture on the Transportation appropriations bill. We could have been invoking cloture on that bill this morning. It simply has not been necessary.

We have some nominations we are still working our way through. One Republican Senator has held up a nomination for quite some time. He came to me yesterday and said: You can go ahead and put that one through.

I am satisfied and confident this is the way the Senate should operate.

We have the health care bill on the horizon. If we are able to get 60 votes to proceed to it, it is going to take everyone's cooperation and patience to work through the amendments that will be necessary to go forward on that bill. I am hopeful and confident we can work through that bill. If not, we will have to go to reconciliation, which I hope we don't have to do, but if we have to, we have to do that.

Anyway, I feel good about what we have been able to accomplish this week. I repeat, it sets a pattern of how we should be legislating.

Behind me is Senator SPECTER. He came to me a number of times last year and said: Are there going to be amendments allowed? And I said yes. He said he would vote to move forward on the bill. I think there were other people who felt the same way, but they just were not as vocal as Senator SPECTER.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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